



MONTAGUE PLANNING BOARD

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NOTICE OF INFORMATIONAL HEARING

Tuesday January 15, 6:45 PM

Montague Town Hall One Avenue A Turners Falls, MA

The Montague Planning Board will hold an informational hearing on a proposal from the Montague Planning Department to subdivide three 0.4 acre parcels from municipal land along Davis Street that are leased to the Gill-Montague School District for the purpose of developing three affordable owner-occupied single family homes. Following public feedback- the Planning Board will make an advisory recommendation to the Selectboard. The property to be subdivided is identified as Assessors Map 5 Lot 36.



The Town of Montague is an Equal Opportunity Provider & Employer

Planning Department Proposal- Davis Street Lots

Montague's 2015 Housing Plan identifies a shortage in supply of affordable housing in Montague and as well as a goal to increase homeownership rates in the village of Turners Falls (where 47% of units are owner occupied). To address this, the Housing Plan recommends that the Town evaluate surplus municipal land for opportunities to address the affordable housing gap in Montague.

The Town of Montague is in the process of renewing a lease with the Gill-Montague School District for Hillcrest and Sheffield Schools, which presents an opportunity to consider how underutilized land at these schools may be better used to advance affordable housing production. There are portions of the school's leased field along Davis Street that has not been actively used by the School District for many years. The District has indicated no future use is planned. The proposal initiated by the Planning Department is for the Town to consider subdividing up to three 0.4 acre building lots from this field and convey them to an entity that will develop the lots (at their expense) into affordable owner-occupied housing for three families.

Impact to schools- The proposed development will have no operational or functional impact to the schools. Over 27 acres will remain under control of the schools, leaving more than enough room for future expansion and unanticipated future uses. The development will not limit any access points to either of the schools. The new neighbors may help bolster enrollment figures and units will contribute to the tax base.

Impact to neighborhood- The size and shape of the 3 lots will be consistent with other lots in the neighborhood. There are 17 other house lots that encroach onto the Sheffield/Hillcrest "block" from Davis, Crocker, Montague, and Griswold Streets. The proposed lots would be consistent with those. The houses will not be different than other single family homes in the immediate vicinity. Rear and side yard fencing will be required to separate the private properties from the school yard. Sidewalks and trees will be part of the development plan.

What do you mean by "affordable"? "Affordable" is not synonymous with "subsidized" housing. The Town aspires for the units to be deed-restricted affordable housing whereby the value of the house is capped to ensure that it is affordable to qualifying low-income households in the future. This affordable homeownership model has proven effective in Montague. Such units comprise Randall wood Drive, and Winthrop Street subdivisions, as well as "Habitat for Humanity" homes on L Street and Warner Street.

The process- The Planning Board will accept feedback from the public and use that information to advise the School Committee and Selectboard as to whether to pursue this proposal. There are various levels of approvals that will be required from the Select Board and Town Meeting. Ultimately the town would issue a Request for Proposals to engage a developer that will build the homes in accordance with the Town's requirements.

Feedback/ questions can be directed to Walter Ramsey, Town Planner 413 863 3200 x 112
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